

**TRANSCRIPT OF CONSUL GENERAL WALLES' REMARKS  
at the Jerusalem–Ramallah (Qalandia) Road Groundbreaking Ceremony  
Thursday, July 5**

**(with Minister of Local Government Mr. Ziad ElBandak, USAID WB/G Director Howard Sumka, and PEC DAR Director Dr. Mohammad Steiyeh)**

Thank you, shukran. Minister ElBandak, shukran, thank you. Dr. Mohammad Steiyeh, thank you as well. It is a pleasure to be here today for this ceremony to launch the reconstruction of the Jerusalem-Ramallah road.

I'd like to announce today, openly and clearly for everyone to hear, that the United States government and the Palestinian Authority are back in business together.

This is an important project, as Dr. Bandak explained. It is a project that has been needed for many, many years. It is a project that we had hoped to be involved with, and we had given our commitment several years ago that we would do this project. Unfortunately, there have been many delays, but now we're happy, finally, to be here to begin this project.

Every day, Palestinians are faced with challenges as they move between work, and school, and home. This road is an example of the problems and difficulties that they face. Potholes and narrow access on one of the busiest avenues, these should be things that we can correct, and these are things that we are going to correct.

The United States, working through USAID, is pleased to be working with our Palestinian partners, as well as international partners, to improve this road, which we hope will enhance the quality of life for thousands of Palestinians who use this road every day.

Let me thank our colleagues in USAID, in particular Howard Sumka, the Director of AID, for working so hard to get this project moving again so quickly once the decision was made to proceed.

The United States government is committed to helping meet the needs of the Palestinian people. We do this in many ways, for example through this project here, but we're also committed to help you realize your political aspirations as well. We hope there will soon be a Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel in peace and security, and we hope that this happens soon.

We are working on this closely with President Abbas, and also with Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and his government, so that we have progress on the political track, but also projects such as this that help make a difference in the daily lives of Palestinians.

We look forward to continued cooperation between the United States government and the Palestinian Authority, and between the American and the Palestinian people.

Thank you.